



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

TESTIMONY PRESENTED BEFORE THE Select Committee on Children March 2, 2010

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Senate Bill 293 - An Act Providing Certain Adult Adopted Persons With Access to Parental Health information and Information in their Original Birth Certificates

The Department of Public Health opposes Senate Bill 293.

This bill authorizes the Department of Public Health to release a copy of the original birth certificate of a person adopted on or after October 1, 2011, upon request of such person after reaching the age of 21, or other authorized applicant if such person is deceased. The proposal also gives the Department new responsibilities to furnish, collect, and maintain on file, Contact Preference Forms which allows a biological parent to state his or her preference about being contacted by the adult adoptee, as well as maintaining health history forms related to the biological parents.

The Department opposes this bill because it adds responsibilities that are beyond the scope of its mission. Vital records is responsible for collecting birth, marriage, civil union and death data. This bill, as drafted, makes the department responsible for some aspects of the adoption process – collecting information about a biological parent's contact preference, and the biological parent's health history. These functions are presently the responsibility of the State Adoption Registry managed by DCF, clearly the executive body in which it should remain.

If the bill were passed, the Department would incur increased costs to carry out these additional administrative responsibilities. We anticipate a cost of approximately \$2500 per year to administer the Contact Preference form. This cost includes staff time and increased car usage fees to travel to the off-site vault where adoption records are stored. Additional cost would be incurred in the development and printing of the Contact Preference form and Health History form. The Department will also experience costs to handle the increased volume of requests for original birth certificates, however, due to the design of the bill, the department will not be impacted by these fiscal costs until about 15 years from now, when persons adopted on or after October 1, 2011, reach the age of 21.

In addition to the fiscal impact, we would also like to express one other concern about the bill. It allows the original birth record to be released to "authorized applicants" as defined by §45a-743(3), when the adopted person is deceased. The definition of "authorized applicant" is very broad, and includes parties that are not eligible to receive birth records of persons who are not adopted. (See C.G.S. §7-51(a)) For example, under this proposal, a person claiming to be the biological father of the deceased adopted person, or "any adult descendant", would be entitled access to the original birth certificate. The Department recommends that providing access to "authorized applicants" be given further consideration, allowing only those as defined in 7-51(a) or those with a legitimate interest to obtain the original birth certificate of an adopted person.

Thank you for your consideration of the Department's views on this bill.

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